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NATIONALLY RENOWNED ARTIST COMING HOME FOR RENDEZVOUS

It is always a question whether Montana makes artists famous or whether artists make Montana famous.

Either way, it is time for art lovers to make their plans and get their reservations now for the Montana Historical Society's 32nd Western Rendezvous of Art Aug. 19-22 in Helena when Harley Brown comes home to the show and the place that made him one of the most renowned painters of the West.

"A lot of people in Montana over the years have followed my career and helped me along," Brown said. "Montana was where it all began for me. I am happy to be coming back."

Although he is a charter member of the Northwest Rendezvous Group of artists that work with the Society to put on the four-day celebration in Helena each August, it has been several years since his busy schedule has allowed him to attend the event.

Brown will present a special one-man-show on his life and work as a thank you to the artists and patrons of Rendezvous for their support over the years and to share some of the things that he has learned from and about the people he has known along the way.

"What I am going to do is take the frames off my work and just show some of the stuff that I have done over the years and answer people's questions about it," Brown said.

University of Montana Professor Rafael Chacon is also one of the special guest speakers this year at Rendezvous. He will present "Paintings as Propaganda: Art in

Glacier National Park in the Early 20th Century. “We have some very special guests that will make Rendezvous even more exciting this year,” said Sue Near, who is coordinating the event.

Brown grew up in Alberta and studied art there and at the Camberwell School of Art in London. “I tried everything to get started. I had even gone to restaurants trying to get them to hang my art, but nobody wanted my stuff. I decided to go to Montana,” he said.

By chance, Brown came to the Montana Historical Society in 1973 and ran into then curator of art Bob Morgan, who recognized his talent. “Bless Bob’s soul, he told me ‘we’re going to do something for you,’ and he gave me a one-man show at the Society. I went from zero in my career on up to where I am fortunate to be today,” Brown said.

Morgan said he knew that Brown was a great, budding artist, and his career has been “phenomenal.”

“His rise to national prominence has taken time, but with diligence found only in great artists, he has ascended the heights,” Morgan said.

Brown has written three books including “Confessions of a Starving Artist,” and said that he has mellowed a little. “I guess we were all a little bit more exciting in our younger days,” he said of his Rendezvous experiences. “Now an exciting day to me is going to the Safeway and looking for a cereal.”

The art market has leveled out in recent months, Brown said, but “is beginning to start up again now.”

To find out more about Rendezvous, view some of the art, and register go on line to www.westrendart.org.

